

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04

SIL-01 AID-05 OIC-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /130 W

----- 051288

R 041603Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2640

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION OECD PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 3180

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, PORG, ILO, TS

SUBJ: WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE: CONVERSATION WITH
MOHAMED ENNACEUR

1. SUMMARY: DURING MEETING WITH SPECIAL ASSISTANT DANIEL
HOROWITZ, GOT SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER MOHAMED ENNACEUR
OUTLINED WHAT HE EXPECTED TO BE THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES THAT
WILL CONFRONT WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE IN JUNE. HE
APPEARED TO BE FULLY SYMPATHETIC WITH USG CONCERN THAT
CONFERENCE NOT BECOME EMBROILED IN POLITICAL ISSUES AND
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THAT IT DEVOTE ITSELF ENTIRELY TO TECHNICAL QUESTIONS IT

WAS CONVENED TO DISCUSS. HE EVIDENCED WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST US IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL. WHILE HE APPEARED WELL DISPOSED TO AIDING USG, HE DID, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZE THAT SOME ELEMENTS MAY CREATE AN IRRESISTIBLE MOMENTUM TOWARD ADDRESSING POLITICAL QUESTIONS IN CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. SPECIAL ASSISTANT DANIEL HOROWITZ MET WITH GOT MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS MOHAMED ENNACEUR MAY 3 TO DISCUSS UPCOMING WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE (WEC) AND ADVISED HIM THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD SUPPORT HIM FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CONFERENCE. ENNACEUR EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THIS SUPPORT AND NOTED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD AFL-CIO PRESIDENT GEORGE MEANY HAD ALSO USED HIS INFLUENCE TO SUPPORT THE CANDIDACY. CALLING TO MIND THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND TUNISIA, ENNACEUR SAID THAT HE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO CLOSE COOPERATION WITH US DURING THE CONFERENCE IN ORDER TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS. HOROWITZ TOLD HIM THAT THE U.S. PLACES GREAT IMPORTANCE ON THIS MEETING AND CONSIDERS IT VITAL NOT ONLY AS A FORUM TO DISCUSS THE WORLD'S EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS BUT AN INDICATOR AS WELL OF THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE ILO. HE SAID THAT WE CONSIDER IT MOST IMPORTANT THAT THE CONFERENCE DEVOTE ITSELF TO THE SERIOUS TECHNICAL QUESTIONS IT HAS BEEN CONVENED TO DISCUSS AND THAT IT NOT MISDIRECT ITSELF INTO WIDER AND EXTRANEIOUS POLITICAL ISSUES WHICH IT HAS NO MANDATE TO DISCUSS.

3. ENNACEUR REPLIED THAT HE FORESEES PRESSURE DEVELOPING TO MOVE THE CONFERENCE INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA. HE WAS PERSONALLY AWARE OF PRESSURE FOR TAKING THIS COURSE AMONG AFRICAN STATES BASED ON HIS CONTACTS IN THE AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE RECENTLY HELD IN FREETOWN. HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT SOME LATIN AMERICAN STATES MAY ALSO SUPPORT THE CONSIDERATION OF POLITICAL QUESTIONS BY THE WEC. HE ENUMERATED THREE BROAD PROBLEM AREAS: (1) THE QUESTION OF THE POWER OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE, (2) THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION, AND (3) USE OF THE CONFERENCE BY COMMUNIST STATES TO PRAISE THEIR ECONOMIC SYSTEM AND CONDEMN THE WEST. HE FORESAW AN ATTEMPT BY SOME AFRICAN STATES TO ATTEMPT TO WREST CONTROL OF THE CONFERENCE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE AND GIVE THE CONFERENCE ITSELF FULL POWER TO DECIDE ALL QUESTIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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ON THE MIDDLE EAST, HE BELIEVED THAT THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) WILL COME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE AS AN OBSERVER AND TO PASS A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IMMIGRATION OF ISRAELIS INTO OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AS PART OF ISRAELI IMPERIALIST EXPANSIONISM. HE DID NOT ELABORATE ON THE ANTICIPATED USE OF THE CONFERENCE BY COMMUNIST STATES TO PRAISE THEIR SYSTEM EXCEPT TO MENTION THAT CUBA WOULD PROBABLY PLAY AN ESPECIALLY AGGRESSIVE ROLE. ENNACEUR ASKED WHAT THE

U.S. ATTITUDE IS TOWARD THESE QUESTIONS AND SOLICITED SUGGESTIONS
ON HOW THEY MIGHT BE COUNTERED.

4. HOROWITZ TOLD HIM THAT THE USG BELIEVES THAT THE GOVERNING
BODY OF THE ILO GAVE THE WEC A NARROW MANDATE TO DISCUSS ONLY
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS AND GAVE
THE STEERING COMMITTEE GREAT POWER OVER THE CONFERENCE IN ORDER
TO KEEP IT WITHIN THESE BOUNDS. HE SAID WE WOULD OPPOSE ANY
ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THESE GROUND RULES. ENNACEUR NOTED THAT THE
QUESTION OF STEERING COMMITTEE POWERS IS RELATED AS WELL TO
THE ISSUE OF THE RELATIVE POWERS OF THE ILO GOVERNING BODY
VIS-A-VIS THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AND SAID MANY STATES BELIEVE
THAT THERE MUST BE A CHANGE IN THE BALANCE. HOROWITZ TOLD HIM
THAT WE SEE THIS AS A QUESTION THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN
THE CONTEXT OF THE ILO GOVERNING BODY AND GENERAL CONFERENCE
AND DEFINITELY NOT IN THE WEC. ENNACEUR WAS NOT EXACTLY SURE
OF ILO RULES ON TECHNICAL CONFERENCES HELD UNDER ITS AUSPICES,
NOTING THAT MANY STATES FEEL TECHNICAL CONFERENCES HAVE POWER
TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN RULES, AND SAID HE WAS ABOUT TO SEE ILO
DIRGEN BLANCHARD'S CHEF DE CABINET AND WOULD ASK HIS ADVICE.
HOROWITZ ASSURED HIM THAT THE USG HAS NO DOUBTS ON THIS
QUESTION AND IS DETERMINED THAT TECHNICAL CONFERENCES MUST
ADDRESS THEMSELVES ONLY TO THE AGENDA GIVEN THEM BY THE ILO.

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2641

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION OECD PARIS

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5. ON THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS, HOROWITZ TOLD ENNACEUR THAT THE USG HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHAT POSITION IT WOULD TAKE ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLO AS AN OBSERVER. REGARDING POSSIBLE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED RESOLUTIONS ATTACKING ISRAEL, HE TOLD HIM THAT THE USG WOULD OPPOSE THIS SORT OF ACTION VIGOROUSLY AND COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY CLEARLY POLITICAL RESOLUTION REGARDLESS OF WHATEVER EMPLOYMENT RELATED LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT MIGHT BE PHRASED. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS QUESTION TOUCHES ON THE BASIC ISSUE OF U.S. CONCERN OVER POLITICALIZATION OF THE ILO. THE USG IS HOPEFUL THAT THERE WILL BE A CHANGE IN THE ORIENTATION OF THE ILO AWAY FROM EXTRANEEOUS POLITICAL QUESTIONS AND TOWARD
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ILO RELATED ISSUES THAT WILL PERMIT THE USG TO REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE ORGANIZATION. HOROWITZ TOLD HIM THAT IF THE WEC ADOPTS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED RESOLUTIONS THIS ACTION WOULD CAUSE US DEEP CONCERN AND INDICATE THAT THE ILO MEMBERSHIP HAD NOT TAKEN HEED OF THE POINTS RAISED IN THE USG'S LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW.

6. HOROWITZ ASSURED ENNACEUR THAT THE USG HAD NOT TAKEN AN IRREVOCABLE DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ILO AND THAT WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE ORGANIZATION WILL REDIRECT ITSELF TOWARD THE ISSUES IT WAS CREATED TO RESOLVE AND LEAVE POLITICAL QUESTIONS TO INSTITUTIONS WITH THE COMPETENCE TO RESOLVE THEM. WE TOLD HIM THAT WE DO NOT OPPOSE THE CONSIDERATION OF THE POLITICAL QUESTIONS OF CONCERN TO MANY ILO MEMBER STATES, BUT THAT WE ONLY WANT TO KEEP THE QUESTIONS OUT OF FORA WHERE THEY DO NOT BELONG.

7. ENNACEUR SAID THAT BY THE END OF THIS WEEK, WHEN THE AFRICAN/WEST ASIA PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE WEC IS COMPLETED, HE WILL HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS HE ENUMERATED. HE EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH US TO KEEP THE WEC'S ATTENTION FOCUSED ON ITS TECHNICAL AGENDA BUT POINTED OUT THE GREAT PRESSURE AMONG MANY STATES DEVELOPING TO SEND IT IN OTHER, MORE POLITICAL

DIRECTIONS. ENNACEUR AGREED THAT WE WOULD REMAIN IN
CLOSE CONTACT AND COORDINATE OUR EFFORTS.

8. COMMENT: ENNACEUR GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF BEING VERY WELL
INTENTIONED, AWARE OF AND SYMPATHETIC TO USG CONCERNS OVER THE
ILO. HE APPEARED PREDISPOSED TO HELP US AND INDICATED HE WILL
DO ALL THAT HE CAN. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT HE IS UNDER GREAT
PRESSURE AND MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST THE MOMENTUM CREATED
TOWARD POLICIZING THE ILO EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE.
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